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NATURE-POEMS.

T. EDWARDS.

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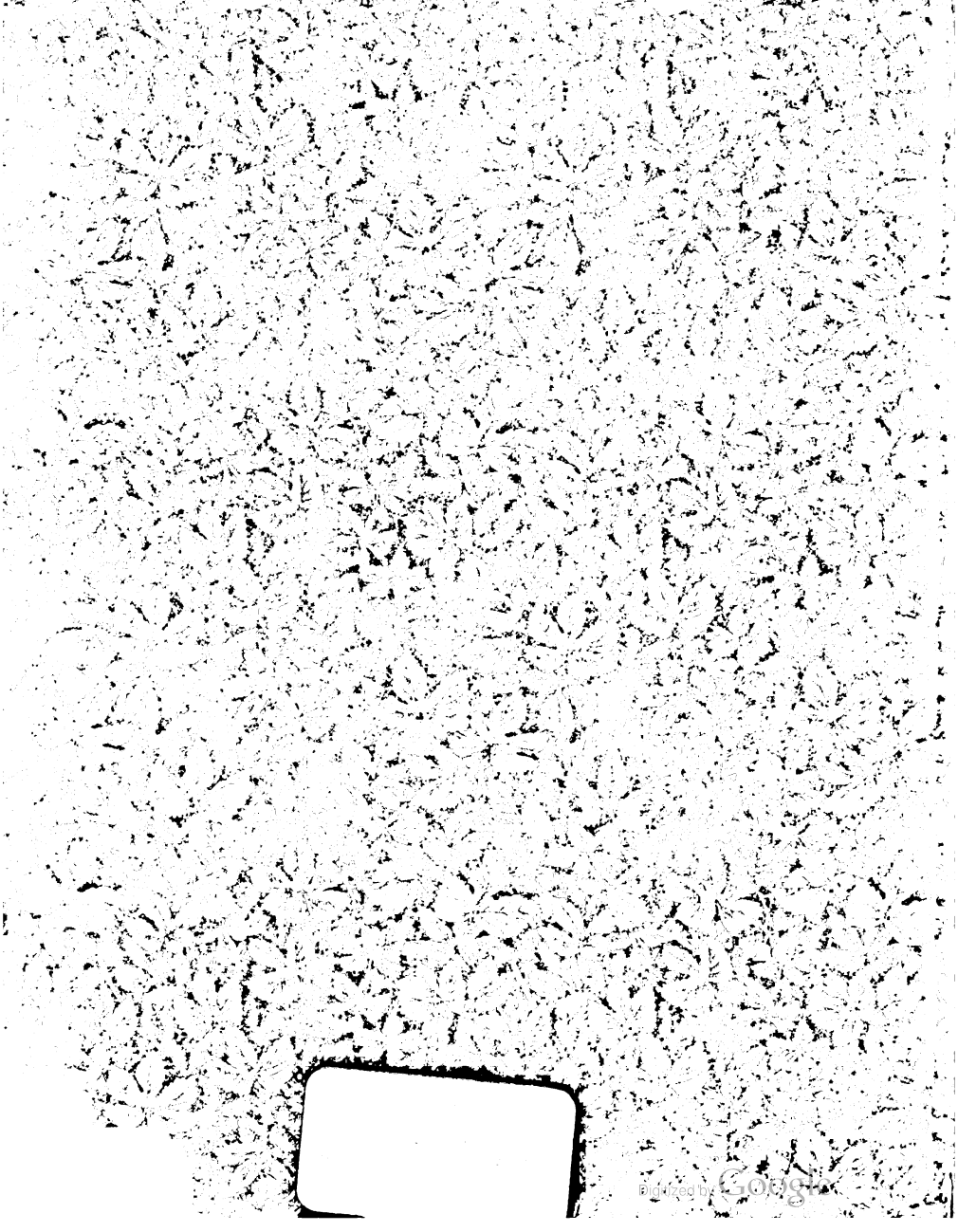
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NATURE POEMS.

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NATURE-POEMS

(AND OTHERS).

BY

THOMAS EDWARDS,

MINISTER OF SALEM CHAPEL,

TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Tunbridge Wells:

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ON THE SKYLARK.

CHARMING songster of the skies
From the meads ascending,
Much I love to see thee rise
Upward, upward tending.

How refreshing are thy lays
In the dewy morning,
Chanting forth thy Maker's praise,
Earthborn sluggards scorning.

Higher, higher, higher still,
Fanning unseen breezes;
Whirling round and round at will,
As it best thee pleases.

Weaker, weaker, seems thy song,
While thine upward soaring
Seems to say thou art anon
Earthly things ignoring.

Through the fleecy clouds of day—
In the deep blue azure—
We still watch thy swift-winged way,
Watch with silent pleasure.

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Downward, downward, downward now
Is thy flight (we hear thee),
Falling, falling, falling low,
Nearer, nearer to me.

Yes, I see thee ! here thou art !
Now thy song is over,
Dropping with a lightning dart
In thy bed of clover.

Striking emblem thou of man
In his best condition ;
Rise as high as e'er he can,
Thine is his position !

Little matters what his birth,
Or how high his station ;
He must drop at last to earth
In humiliation.

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THOUGHTS ON A FLY AND A DAISY.

NEVER did I before espy
Such beauty in a little fly
As I beheld this day!
Its tiny eyes of lily white,
Those sparkling gems of living light,
That like the lightning play.

Its nutbrown head, its plumaged wings,
And slender legs like living springs,
Which in an instant bound;
Taking a circle quick around me
As quick as thought itself can be,
My wisdom doth confound!

This marvellous machine I own
To be the work of God alone,
And worthy of His hand;
For all the world, were it to try,
Could not create or make one fly,
So exquisitely planned!

I closely watched the easy grace
With which it washed its tiny face
With hair-like arms and hands!
"How can it be," I cried withal,
"Those joints, so exquisitely small,
"Should act so like to man's?"

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To please my muse it seemed to try ;
I much admired the little fly—
    It seemed on purpose sent !
At last it gave a buzz and bound,
I looked in vain for it around—
    Away the insect went !

I pondered on its magic flight,
When, falling on the lawn, my sight
    With one more tiny thing
Arrested was. There at my feet
I saw a daisy, clean and neat,
    From out the green grass spring.

I thought I heard it silent cry,
" You've complimented much the fly :
    " Am I not worth a thought ?
" I cannot buzz, and fly, and spring,
" I know, like yonder little thing,
    " But that is not my fault ! "

Saluted thus, I plucked the flower,
And could have gazed for full an hour
    Upon its lovely form ;
Within whose pure white radiance grew
Such golden constellation true,
    Of flowers well-formed, though small.

I felt within a poet's fire,
Not knowing which most to admire—
    The daisy or the fly !
At last I felt my spirit free,
And cried " Lord, all Thy works praise Thee !
    " To do the same I'll try."

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OUR BLACKBIRD (1881).

This spring, almost the whole day long,
A blackbird fine, with yellow bill,
Has charmed us with his cheerful song—
For sing he does, and sing he will.

Soon as the early morning breaks,
Some time before the rising sun,
Our dark-plumed friend position takes,
And thence his morning song's begun.

In sycamore and hawthorn tree,
In apple and in holly, too,
We hear him sing alternately
As lusty as a bird can do.

No doubt his ladylove is near,
Brooding o'er eggs or tending young,
While her to cherish and to cheer
Is why we hear his warbling tongue.

Whate'er his motive really be,
Or what that prompts him thus to sing,
'Tis not for us to say, but we
Well know he makes our garden ring.

And often, like our local band,
He takes position in fresh place;
He seems to like this change of stand,
And gives his song an added grace.

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One note especially we hear,
And this we notice every day ;
It sounds half-human in our ear,
And three times " Pretty " seems to say.

He rises, and swells out his throat,
His voice rings out so clear ;
This " Pretty, pretty, pretty " note,
May it not mean " You dear ? "

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THE RAINBOW.

THOU lovely phantom of the sky—
  Token to Noah given—
No artist's colour can outvie
  Thy peaceful span in Heaven.

Seen when the sun is shining bright,
  With darkened cloud behind,
When raindrops look like gems of light,
  Then thy rich arch we find.

Scarce have we time to say "Behold!"
  So shortened is thy stay,
That half thy beauty is not told
  Ere thou dost pass away.

Emblem of life! a vapour thin!
  Short time doth it abide;
To live we scarcely here begin
  When into death we glide.

Then doth our nature all dissolve!
  Earth! air! fire! water, too!
A mystery which none can solve,
  For all is hid from view.

The spirit, soul, the life, the breath,
  Whate'er all these may be,
They vanish from us all in death,
  Like rainbows which we see.

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HARBINGERS OF SPRING.

After its winter's sleeping,
Uprising from the sod,
We see the snowdrop peeping,
With its pure graceful nod;
First in its wake, it seems to say
"The winter soon will pass away."

How like the snow for whiteness!
Yet doth its sweet appearing,
With its delicious brightness,
Bring with it far more cheering;
More consolation well we know
The snowdrop gives, than drops of snow.

Emblems of resurrection!
As from their graves they burst
In beautiful perfection
Like saints, they rise up first;
Yet snowdrops quickly fade away,
While saints shall live through endless day.

In beautiful succession,
Now see the crocus rise;
Awhile it takes possession
Of our admiring eyes;
It seems to say "Now look on me,
"I would the snowdrop's rival be!"

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Next the lovely wallflower wakes,
All precious is its bloom;
Gold and crimson are its flakes,
Refreshing its perfume.
When this puts forth in rich array
Our gardens all around look gay.

The birds among the branches
Now cheer us with their song;
Our pleasure it enhances
While strolling woods among.
The soft'ning breeze our face doth fan,
And glad's both out and inner man.

How lovely now at morning
To see the lamp of day,
After a gladsome dawning
Rise, and pursue his way.
Which most to admire we scarcely know—
Its morning or its evening glow.

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A LOVELY MORNING'S WALK IN JANUARY, 1885.

How pleasant is this lovely morn!
The sun is brightly shining,
The frost is melting on the ground
Before its rays declining.

The trees, though stript of foliage green,
Have boughs with buds full teeming;
The fields between them, too, are seen
Bright, beautiful and gleaming.

The hedgerows, and the ferns as well,
Though both, of course, are faded,
Each of their summer glories tell
By nature's own hand aided.

The ivy leaves, and brambles, too,
Meet not with our rejection,
Since beauty in them all we view,
Not one's without attraction.

Nor must we pass those berries bright
Upon the holly growing;
These, with the hawthorn red, delight
And cheer us in our going.

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Some cattle in the meads we see
With satisfaction feeding,
They happy all appear and free,
Not even winter heeding.

Refreshed, we wander back to home,
Take up our daily duties,
In heart and mind both stronger grown
By seeing nature's beauties.

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ADMIRING THE CLOUDS.

OFTEN I lift my wondering eyes,
And watch with real delight,
To see the clouds like mountains rise,
With shadows dark and light.

To see them float along the sky
In every shape and form,
Show forth His power and majesty
Who doth the heavens adorn.

The silver crest, or golden hue,
With shining sun behind,
Affords the glory always new
To every thoughtful mind.

God balances them one and all,
His chariots are they;
Hail, rain or snow doth from them fall,
He speaks, and they obey.

At His command and wind they go—
By these, to us unseen,
He wafts them o'er us to and fro
As seemeth good to Him.

The very smallest cloud we see,
Not larger than our hand,
Has with the large its destiny,
And moves at God's command.

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SUNRISE.

This morn I saw the sun arise,
His golden gates unfold,
It gladdened nature and my eyes
Beyond what can be told.

His radiant beams the clouds first kiss,
With tint of rosy hue,
Then full of glory and of bliss
He broke upon my view.

Fantastic shadows here and there,
As he in grandeur rose,
Would often in the sky appear,
Their beauties to disclose.

What majesty, when o'er the hill
First burst this orb of light,
His race to run, with power and will,
Was his supreme delight.

My swelling heart could do no less
For this refreshing sight,
Than God, my Maker's name, to bless
For such a sun of light.

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ON RETURNING SPRING.

SWEET springtime is returning,
The days now longer grow,
Anticipation's burning
With her accustomed glow;
We watch with pleasure and delight
The longer day and shorter night.

The birds begin to marry,
We hear them twitter round;
The winter must not tarry,
For softer grows the ground;
The crocus and the snowdrop white
Our senses greet with fond delight,

The woods with bird song echo
When days are warm and fine;
We soon shall hear the cuckoo,
For well she knows her time;
The busy bees are buzzing round
For honey where the flowers are found.

All nature now is waking,
The birds, the flowers, the bees;
Hard winter is forsaking,
We feel the softening breeze;
Delightful spring! we all agree
Once more to fondly welcome thee.

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TO MY CAGED LARK.

IMPRISONED bird, I pity thee,
Yet sorry am to say,
Through selfishness I'm not inclined
To let thee go away.

Thy flapping wings and upward start
Oft plead for thy discharge,
And still I cannot with thee part,
Nor let thee go at large.

I'm anxious to secure thy song,
Sweet warbler of the skies,
Then be content to suffer wrong,
Since now you cannot rise.

More human honour thou wilt gain
Within these bars of wire,
Than when, with sweet melodious strain,
Thou didst to Heaven aspire.

I'll feed thee well and kindly care
For all thy wants each day;
Then my caresses kindly share,
Nor long to fly away.

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I think I hear you twitter now,
"Ope' my cage door; I'll try
"What these imprisoned wings can do
"In yonder open sky."

But for the present you must rest
Within your narrow home;
Some future day I may feel pressed
To say to thee "Begone!"

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THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

I saw a spider the other day,
And in its wily web, a fly!
It tried in vain to get away:
I said, "Alas! how like am I!"

I took the little helpless thing
From out its dreadful net of woe;
Released at once its fastened wing
And let the little captive go.

I said again, "Ah! this is me!
"A hand that's stronger than my own,
"From sin's strong web must set me free,
"Or I for ever am undone.

I, in that spider, Satan saw,
His fine-spun web, I view'd as sin:
How oft in thought to it I draw,
Till mentally entangled in?

To my deliverer I cry,
To save my soul from every snare;
To on me always keep His eye,
And guide and keep me everywhere.

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ODE TO THE SEA.

O, THOU ever-charming sea!
For thou lovely art to me,
With thy ebbing, with thy flowing,
Sometimes coming, sometimes going;
On thy changing glassy face
Colours of all shades we trace.

O, thou ever-changing sea,
Thou art wonderful to me;
With thy soft and gentle splashing
Thou art now the shore caressing;
Yet perhaps to-morrow found
Shaking thunder-like the ground.

O, thou vast majestic sea,
How I love to gaze on thee!
Nor can I forbear to praise,
Though so treacherous are thy ways;
Who thy waters can rely on
Now the lamb, and then the lion.

Gentle now thou art appearing,
Telling us that nothing fearing
We may put our trust in thee,
For thou wilt not angry be;
But to-morrow, we may find thee
Grown so mad that none can bind thee.

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O, thou proud and haughty ocean,
One can regulate thy motion!
Notwithstanding all thy moaning,
Notwithstanding all thy foaming,
One of thee is not afraid:
By His word thy power is stayed.

Though like Job's proud war-horse swelling,
In the distance battle smelling,
Stamping, snorting, rearing, pawing,
All around thy presence awing:
At His word, proud, tossing sea,
Instantly thou calm must be!

Though so oft the shore art laving,
To exceed thy bounds art craving,
Yet like one o'ercome at last,
Finding bounds cannot be passed,—
Then thou stayest at His will,
Whose mighty hush saith, "Peace! be still!"

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A GLORIOUS DOWNFALL OF RAIN IN TIME OF NEED, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1874.

BEAUTIFUL rains! Beautiful rains!
Soaking the meadows, soaking the plains,
Filling the brooks, supplying the springs,
Reaching the roots of all living things.

Large trees of the forest thy deluging share,
Who, but for thy bounty, in spring would look bare;
While cattle and man next summer would be
Consumed with drought, but for visits from thee.

Beautiful rains! Beautiful rains!
Fall in abundance on meadows and plains!
Who can refrain from blessing the Giver
Who makes the dry places to "run like a river"?

Beautiful rains enriching the ground,
Making our earth with fruits to abound;
Beautiful rains, more precious than gold,
Your worth and your riches can never be told.

Beautiful rains! your patterings fall
On men of all classes, the great and the small:
How oft a refreshing, our spirits have found,
To watch your downpouring on all things around.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF HOME.

WHO does not love with fond delight
Upon their childhood's home to dwell ?
It makes the wayworn spirit bright
When of our youthful days we tell.

Especially our native place,
Which did our youthful gambols share,
How pleasantly we now retrace
Our happy sprightly movements there.

Those times are gone, those seasons fled,
Our spring, our summer, autumn, too ;
Life's winter's here, and on our head
The snow-white frost of hair we view.

All own that life's a mystery,
In which we oft both smile and frown ;
What changes many live to see,
While thousands are by death cut down.

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THE TWO HOMES.

We visited two cottage homes,
But will not now say where,
Yet think it right and well becomes
To say what we saw there,

The first depressed our hearts to see
The filth and squalor there;
The children dirty were all three,
Nor was there one sound chair.

We tenderly sought out the cause,
Which makes us sad to think,
It was through breaking nature's laws
In laziness and drink.

The inmates of the other home,
Though poor, were neat and clean,
The children's faces, too, we own,
Were fitting to be seen.

The chairs, the table, and the floor,
With pictures on the wall,
Proved thrift and carefulness before
Had rightly managed all.

Both parents gave like evidence,
No laziness was there;
Excess of drink was banished thence
That all might blessing share.

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OUR INFANTS.

WHEN we behold an infant's face—
Our own fair offspring, too—
With what delight we love to trace
And our own image view,

"'Tis just like mother!" some will cry;
Others, again, declare
At every glance they can espy
Its father's image there.

The little dancing babe, meanwhile,
With laughing face and round,
Appears to say, with lovely smile,
"In me you both are found.

"I have upon you both a claim
"Of care and kindness, too;
"I hope to pay you back the same
"In blessings not a few."

Then comes the sweet parental kiss,
While baby springs in joy;
Such sight as this we would not miss,
Whether with girl or boy.

These offsprings o'er our households shed
More pleasure far than toys;
These olive branches by us fed
Repay with many joys.

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GRATITUDE FOR REFRESHING SLEEP.

It has been said, and truly so,
That balmy sleep repairs
Poor weary nature when 'tis low,
And soothes away its cares.

Thus we have found it many times,
And millions more beside;
No caste, no people, and no climes
But have its comforts tried.

While held in its enchanting arms
Monarchs' ambitions cease;
Oppressed are free from all alarms,
For all is rest and peace.

The miser here forgets his gold,
The poor forget their woe,
He that has bought, he that has sold,
Alike no difference know.

With sleep the senses are at rest,
It conquers every will;
It makes the most unruly blessed,
And saith to all "Be still!"

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OUR COMPLEX LIFE.

WHAT a complex world we live in!
Some are laughing, some are crying,
Some are born, and many dying;
Some are buying, some are selling,
Lies and truth each other telling.
Some are working, some are thieving,
Many are each other grieving;
Some are plotting, scheming, fighting:
Cruelly each other biting.
With a net, man and his brother
Do too often hunt each other.
Many are there much afflicted,
And in poverty neglected;
Others, so much wealth partaking
That it keeps them nightly waking.
Do we wait for their uprising?
Then they're seen good works despising.
Until they're dead, their hive of money
Gives to other bees no honey.
Some there are the true pursuing,
Who to many good are doing;
Noble hearts, with kindly feeling
Aiming at poor nature's healing:
These, tis true, are seldom seen,
Since they're few and far between:
Oft their works are wrongly stated,
Often through mistakes they're hated.
What a complex world we live in!
Beautiful! but spoiled through sinning.

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MY ÆOLIAN HARP.

AWAKE, ye unseen winds! to-day
Cause my Æolian harp to play,
Since 'tis alone thy breezy wings
Make melody on all its strings.

To thee alone it is it owes
All the fantastic sounds it knows;
Its notes of treble, tenor, bass,
Respond to thee in every case.

While thou upon its strings do breathe,
With life its bosom seems to heave,
And changing sounds throughout the day
Anon are heard, then die away.

At times it softly seems to call
"Oh! pity me, ye listeners all!"
Then with fresh life and cheerful sound
It makes the traveller gaze around.

Its sound our senses fascinates,
Sleeps with the wind, with it awakes;
Oft pouring forth its plaintive tones
In softest music, sighs or groans.

Then wake ye winds! blow strong to-day,
Cause my Æolian harp to play;
To list to thee, in silent bower,
We fain would while away an hour.

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OUR POSTMAN.

WHO has not felt a moment's shock
To hear the front door bell,
Or trembled at the double knock
Of one that's known so well?

Quick is the footstep which we hear,
While sharp and short's the ring;
Next minute and the servant's here,
Who doth the letter bring.

No man more closely watched than he,
Through window-blind or gate;
The news he brings all wish to see,
And for the postman wait.

The anxious merchant seeks to know,
And busy tradesman, too,
How trade and money markets go,
And learn what's best to do.

Parents from children long to hear,
Children alike look out,
All glad to see the postman near
With letter holding out.

The lover, too, will glance his eye,
To see the quick man pass,
And hopes within his bag to spy
A letter from his lass.

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The maiden meets him in the street,
He runs his letters through,
And, with a smile that's rather sweet,
Saith "Here is one for you."

If none his nimble fingers find,
He gently shakes his head,
While she, with cogitative mind,
Recedes with heavy tread.

Ah! who can tell the Yeas or Noes
His magic bag contains;
Those envelopes bring heavy woes,
And pleasurable pains.

Good news, of course, all want to hear,
From country or from town,
While adverse brings the sigh and tear,
Which make the hands hang down.

To read the tidings through at times
We need half hold our breath:
A birth's recorded in some lines,
The next announce a death.

"Good speculation, this," some cry,
"We thought the thing would take;"
Another missive, by-and-bye,
Points out the sad mistake.

The postman still goes whistling on,
With double knock and ring,
Right glad when all his burden's gone,
Whether we weep or sing.

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OUR ROBIN.

ONCE more the leaves are falling,
Swallows are on the wing,
At eve, mid-day and morning
We hear the robin sing.

When other birds forsake us,
Nor give us one sweet note,
His song to thought awakes us,—
Such warblings from his throat.

In spring and in the autumn
His friendly note we hear,
But winter's every weather
His song is wont to cheer.

His rosy breast looks cheering,
His nut-brown plumage, too,
Makes always his appearing
A pleasant form to view.

Then with our crumbs invited,
Our dwellings he'll invade,
He seems, in fact, delighted
With such kind care repaid.

As from the hands are dropping
The crumbs he doth so prize,
He'll fix on you, still hopping,
His large black peering eyes.

In universal favour
He stands with young and old,
So let us all endeavour
To feed him in the cold.

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THE NIGHTINGALE.

How sweet, when evening shades prevail,
To steal from mortal cares away,
And seek some pleasant lowly vale,
Where nightingales their notes display.

How soft, how solemn, and how clear,
Though short, indeed, appears their song;
It drops most sweetly on the ear,
And seems to fire both heart and tongue.

As water dropping in some dell,
Sounding at times both soft and loud,
Such is the music of his spell,
Of which he may be justly proud.

Borne on the breeze from out the wood
It stops the hasty passer by;
While he exclaims in silent mood,
With thee, sweet bird, there's none can vie.

Repeated with a matchless skill
We wonder how it e'er was given
To little birds thus to reveal
A foretaste of the peaceful heaven.

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THE SETTING SUN.

We watched with rapture the receding sun;
Its like for beauty seldom can we view;
In giant strength he had his day's work done;
In glory now he bids the world adieu.

Behind a cloud of purple as a bank,
Blended with plum, and mixed with crimson glow,
The orb of day in majesty there sank
That other regions might his rising know.

Fantastic shades of beauty met the eye
In changing clouds as he from earth withdrew;
Vainly the best skilled artist there might try
To paint the glory breaking on the view.

A golden chain of clouds in one straight line
In royal glory on his crest appeared;
No thought or language could we then define
To speak its beauty as its goal is neared.

Peaceful and calm the evening was that day
As we beheld those rays of glory bright;
With ravished eyes we saw them die away,
And, like the sun, we said as well, "Good night."

So may our last end calm and tranquil be,
While sinks our life into its peaceful rest,
Smooth and unruffled as a summer sea,
Reclining only on the Saviour's breast.

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THE CAPTIVE BEE.

WITHIN my little garden grew
A lovely scented flower,
Where bees resorted, not a few,
To gather sweets each hour.

Its petals opened wide and far,
While busy bees made known
Much honey could be gathered there
To fill their waxen comb.

One bee went deep into the cell
Of an expanding flower
As though he meant therein to dwell
For many a happy hour.

Then with my finger and my thumb
I pressed the petals to;
The wrathful bee began to hum,
Not knowing what to do.

He battered with his wings about,
And buzzed aloud therein,
Until the hand should let him out
Which made him fast within.

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Then opened I his honey-cage,
And laughed to see him fly;
He went away in fearful rage,
Nor even said "Good bye!"

And yet withal he seemed to speak
Some good advice to me:
"When you," said he, "some honey seek,
"Think of your captive bee!

"Select your sweets, yet have a care,
"Lest in some prison-cell
"You be compelled, before aware,
"Too long therein to dwell!"

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OUR BEAUTIFUL COMMONS.

YES, they are beautiful, indeed,
No floral touches do they need
Of science or of art;
Their beauties oft our spirits fire—
We can't express all we admire,
No, not a thousandth part.

We might as well try to adorn
The rising sun at early morn,
Or at its evening glow;
The God of nature gives it grace,
And fills with beauty all its space,
The hills and vales below.

The rocks, the gorse, the heath, the fern,
Its open spaces all adorn,
With rural silent dells;
Here, with its sweet salubrious air,
Are blessings in which all may share—
O matchless Tunbridge Wells!

We call it matchless; for we own
No other spot to us is known
That can with it compare;
The scenery on every hand,
To say the least, is simply grand—
'Tis lovely everywhere!

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THE HIGH ROCKS.

WHEN, whence, or how these mighty fabrics rose,
Save by a power supreme, no being knows,
But there they are, while we in silence gaze
In awe, in wonder, and in much amaze.

Nature the secret keeps as gates of death;
We whisper, as we look, with bated breath,
"Geologists, with all their stern resolve,
"The mighty problem fail to clearly solve!"

The Great Invisible we plainly see
In these huge piles, for in them all is He;
In towering majesty they sternly stand,
While we so much admire what He hath planned.

Here, on their wild fantastic shapes we pore,
And, rather than attempt to explain, adore;
'Tis in the mass His mighty power we see,
A presence that can make e'en mountains flee.

Mid pines, mid ferns, mid evergreens, they rise
Like mighty giants pointing to the skies;
We, in their silent language can but share
And say "He's wond'rous here and everywhere."

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BEND TO THE BREEZE.

O BEND to the breeze! O bend to the breeze!
'Tis better than stubborn remain;
O bend to the breeze! O bend to the breeze!
And you shall rise upward again.

'Tis better to bend, 'tis better to bend,
Than stubbornly stand till you break;
Rebellion and pride soon come to an end—
O bend like the reed on the lake.

The wind breaks the oak, the cedar, the pine,
Remember, proud spirit, 'tis so,
And yet the poor rush, while it bends to the wind,
Remains and still upward doth grow.

So bend to the breeze! so bend to the breeze!
Though lowly you bend to the ground,
And you shall remain while many proud trees,
Around you no more shall be found.

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WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

BENEATH this venerable dome
Tread softly, mortal, tread—
This royal resting-place and home
Of earth's illustrious dead.

Here silence seems to reign profound
Save when the organ's peal
In all its chapels echoes round,
And thoughtless solemn feel.

Here potentates for dust resign
Their jewel'd crowns and thrones;
Here earthly glories cease to shine,
For now 'tis mouldering bones.

Of human greatness see the end,
Each monument well scan,
Then pause—and let my musing friend
Alas! say "What is man?"

Beneath this vaulted arch each tomb,
Although with brass inlaid,
In mother earth's consuming womb
Will soon be all decayed.

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For kingly glory ne'er descends
Beneath the stone or sod;
The grave is where its lustre ends,
The rest we leave with God.

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OVER THE HEATH.

Over the heath and far, far away,
Through the green meadows let's ramble to-day,
Round through the coppice that's skirting the hill,
Through the green lane and by the windmill.

Fine is the morning, so pray let us go,
Where the sweet violets and primroses grow ;
Nor doubt we but in the green coppice and vale,
We cuckoo shall hear and sweet nightingale.

The landscape is lovely wherever we look,
If from the hilltop or down by the brook ;
The breeze is refreshing, oft fanning our face,
Enhancing our pleasure in every place.

Then over the heath come, come, with us stray,
Sweet posies we'll gather we doubt not to-day ;
Anemones, cowslips, and twigs of green trees,
That juvenile ramblers are certain to please.

Meanwhile, as we're walking earth's beauties among,
The blackbird and thrush will cheer with their song ;
While over our heads, ascending the skies,
We hear the lark sing, and see it arise.

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OUR NATIVE PLACE:

A Tribute to Tunbridge Wells.

Apart from prejudice, 'tis hard to trace
The local beauties of our native place;
Some scope or latitude should thus be shown
To those who make its excellencies known.
Reared on its soil its social ties are such
Few think they overrate the spot too much.
From infancy attached, some favourite nook
Lives in our thought, perchance some flowing brook,
Or rising mound, where, fanned by gentle breeze,
Enchanting scenes the senses please;
Some rural grove, perhaps some spreading tree,
Beneath whose branches well remember we
How once we frolic'd, ere life's troubles press'd
As often since with weight upon our breast.
Oh, then, o'er stiles, across yon pleasant mead
With winding path, how often did we speed,
By turns there bounding, and with eagle eye
To rival other, each would earnest try;
Then search for flowers, though wild, yet doubly sweet,
Where buttercups, wild rose, and woodbine meet;

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These, interspersed with twigs of budding trees,
Our then light hearts and eyes were wont to please.
Nor pass we lightly o'er the primrose sweet,
In which simplicity and fragrance meet.
Immersed in dew, it springs amid the grass,—
Our life's fair emblem, since how short it lasts!
Its new-born hue of yellow soon decays,
It blooms, turns pale, then droops, and ends its days.
Who first observes it after wintry skies
Exults with joy, like one that's found a prize.
Who has not in his infant days, well pleased,
Plucked with both hands at once its flowers and leaves,
Till, dropping from the same which held no more,
He with reluctance gives the pleasure o'er?
Those days are gone, yet live those banks, those flowers,
Those purling brooks, those sweet retreats, those bowers,
Fresh, as though present in our musing still,
While junior hands and feet, with equal skill
O'er the same tract, with our once fond delight
Go forth in little bands to greet our sight.
In them, we seem ourselves to live again,
Pleased with their pleasure, feeling too each pain;

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Yet now more sober grown, with easier pace,
We quiet walk where we were wont to race;
Or sit on gate or seat, if near at hand,
Admiring all the works which wisdom planned.
And where, we ask, are there so many spells
To hold our reverie as Tunbridge Wells?
Art here, and Nature, both unite to grace
In our esteem, this charming watering place,
Where mineral springs with healthful waters flow,
And flowers and ferns alike spontaneous grow;
Gorse, in its season, with its yellow hue,
Seems like a field of living gold to view—
At most times green, save when upon its crest
The pure white snow or hoary frost doth rest.
Here rocks salute the peering stranger's eye
Which fails their true antiquity to spy;
Geologists may say they being owe
To yonder sea, which once did hither flow;
While others think the floods have washed away
The mother earth, to give them full display.
Each will dispute—let each one have his taste—
Enough for us they do our Commons grace;
To see among them on a summer's day,
The children gambol with delight and play;
Then scale their heights, and from projections leap
Like goats, sure-footed on the mountains steep:

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Makes old folks laugh, and as the same they view,
Warms up their blood, and youth almost renew;
Nor envy we those souls in any way
Who joy not thus to see their offsprings play.
And here, indeed, upon our Commons bright
May oft be seen some scores who thus delight.
Here cricketers will oft at morning's call
Each other test, with skill by bat and ball;
While later in the day, both far and near,
Our local bands with music greet the ear.
Life in simplicity in many forms,
When weather's fine, our lovely heath adorns.
We almost envy youth at times to see
How free from care the most appear to be.
Well, no, for we remember now, when young
How closely to us childish sorrows clung.
Our troubles then were all a child could bear—
Our age has brought our corresponding care.
Alas! to troubles born, e'en from the womb,
Nor leave us will they till we reach the tomb.
Fancied or real, life's shadows cloud our way,
Nor rich, nor poor, are free a single day.
Still, life is blended with ten thousand joys,
By which we triumph o'er what oft annoys;
All is not sorrow, gloom, and sadness here,
Since oft bright lights in sombre clouds appear;

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Hence, darkest clouds of sorrow, grief, and care,
Prove but the background of some rainbow fair.
But we have wandered, therefore will return
And fresh instruction from about us learn.
Walks, rides, and drives, here also so abound,
That which to choose, our visitors confound.
Since our inland delights outvie the sea,
Who would not quit the noisy beach, and shore,
That on our local beauties they might pore ?
Just for a change 'tis well enough to go,—
But for a permanence, such folks as we
Prefer to bid adieu to yonder sea ;
The thudding of its waves, and constant din,
Makes us feel gloomy, both without, within ;
While here and there, the wrecks which reach
the shore
Proclaim brave-hearted sailors are no more.
With its rough grandeur we can well dispense,
And say, let us to Tunbridge Wells go hence.
Here, soft's the atmosphere, salubrious, dry,
All shades of foliage greet the admiring eye,
God's works arrest us as we glance around
And fill our musing soul with thoughts profound.
With matchless skill He built the lofty sky ;
This lovely earth portrays Him ever nigh,—
On sea, on land, in every passing breeze,
In tiny flowers, or in the lofty trees.

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To find Him out, none can, though millions try—
He's ever present, though He dwells on high.
If Him we know, where best He can be known
In Christ Himself, all other we shall own:
His Word and Spirit bring Him far more near
Than aught beside, in things which do appear.
His works, how infinite! they all proclaim,
Each in its way, His underivèd name.
He call Himself the true, the great I AM,
Who first conceived Creation's mighty plan;
While at His bidding then from chaos rose
The shapeless mass, whence order after flows.
Each word of His, fresh stroke of mighty power,
Gave birth to progress each successive hour,
Till perfect all; the mighty Workman stood,
Surveyed the whole, and then pronounced it good.
Pardon our muse, while now we turn our eyes
From Ephraim's Mount, whose prospect so we prize,
Its change of hill and dale, and gorse and heath,
With town in valley at our feet beneath,
While for ourselves we venture must to say
We sniff the sweet sea breeze thereon each day.
Wind travels fast, and from yon hill* we peep
Through the dim distance on the mighty deep.
Nor is it far from thence, as each one knows,
Could we go straight, as fly, they say, the crows;

* Crowborough.

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Besides, when mighty winds have blown, the spray
From yonder ocean here has found its way.
With sceptic laugh scorn not, for we declare,
Though inland, oft we smell the sweet sea air.
The time may come when, in balloon constructed,
We shall be very quickly there conducted;
Since railways yet may have their skill to try
With these conductors through the deep blue sky;
Though terra firma for ourselves, we own,
Is safest, till the other's better known.
Still we must think we feel the channel breeze
Our face oft fan while sitting 'neath the trees,
Though much subdued while on its journey here
To mingle with our local atmosphere.
Thus blended, let it never be forgot
Our lovely heath's a most salubrious spot;
Nor marvel we, that invalids, who come
Here indisposed, in health restored go home.
The means thus used, by Providence designed,
Renews the system, bracing up the mind.
We think it right, as now we've told our tale,
To slacken speed, and gather in our sail.
If we have been a little too profuse,
We trust the reader will forgive the muse,
Since prejudice, we know, will show its face
In favour of our own, our native place.

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OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM.

O God, to Thee we raise
Our hearts in thankful praise
For our loved Queen!
Far as extends her sway,
Her rule let all obey,
And all her subjects say
"God save the Queen."

Preserve in peace her throne
In foreign climes and home;
May one and all
Unite in one acclaim
To praise, O Lord, Thy Name,
For all her peace and fame:
Both great and small.

Meeting on common ground
Let sects and tribes be found
Anthems to raise!
All owe, O God, to Thee,
Here or beyond the sea,
Their peace and liberty,
And Thee we'll praise.

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Kingdoms are Thine alone,
The strength of every throne,
On Thee depends:
If Thou withdraw Thine hand,
Whether on sea or land,
None can with skill command,
Our wisdom ends!

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